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# background

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# United Nations

June 1995

## Official Name: United Nations

### PROFILE

**Established:** By charter signed in San Francisco, California, on June 26, 1945; effective October 24, 1945.

**Purposes:** To maintain international peace and security; to achieve international cooperation in solving economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian problems and in promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in attaining these common ends.

**Members:** 185.

**Official languages:** Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish.

**Principal organs:** General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council, International Court of Justice, Secretariat.

**Budget** (Calendar year 1995): \$12.8 billion (U.S. share \$2.8 billion).

Components: *UN regular assessed budget*—\$1.3 billion (U.S. share—\$304 million); *UN peacekeeping*—\$3.2 billion (U.S. share—\$1 billion); *11 UN-affiliated agencies*—\$1.5 billion (U.S. share—\$361 million). *Voluntary contributions to other UN-affiliated organizations and activities*—\$6.8 billion (U.S. share—\$1.1 billion, much of which consists of food aid).

### Secretariat

**Chief Administrative Officer:** Secretary General of the United Nations, appointed to a five-year term by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. Secretary General: Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

**Staff:** The UN Secretariat has a staff of 14,900, including 1,850 Americans. UN subsidiary bodies, specialized agencies, and the IAEA employ an additional 41,400 people, including 1,950 Americans.

### Preamble to Charter of the United Nations

*We the Peoples of the United Nations Determined*

To SAVE succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and

To REAFFIRM faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women of nations large and small, and

To ESTABLISH conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and

To PROMOTE social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

And for these ends

To PRACTICE tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors, and

To UNITE our strength to maintain international peace and security, and

To ENSURE, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and

To EMPLOY international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

Have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims.

Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations. □

### General Assembly

**Membership:** All UN members except Yugoslavia, which was suspended in 1992.

**President:** Elected at the beginning of each General Assembly session.

**Main committees:** *First*—Political and Security, primarily disarmament.

*Second*—Economic and Financial.

*Third*—Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural.

*Fifth*—Administrative and Budgetary.

*Sixth*—Legal. Many other committees address specific issues, including peacekeeping, outer space, crime prevention, status of women, and UN Charter reform.

### Security Council

**Membership:** Five permanent members (China, France, Russia, U.K., U.S.), each with the right to veto, and 10 non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms.

Five non-permanent members are elected from Africa and Asia combined; one from Eastern Europe; two from Latin America; and two from Western Europe and other areas. The 1995 non-permanent members are Argentina, Botswana, Czech Republic, Germany, Honduras, Indonesia, Italy, Nigeria, Oman, and Rwanda.

**President:** Rotates monthly in English alphabetical order of members.

### Economic and Social Council

**Membership:** 54; 18 elected each year by the General Assembly for three-year terms. The U.S. has always been a member.

**President:** Elected each year.

### International Court of Justice

**Membership:** 15, elected for nine-year terms by the General Assembly and the Security Council from nominees of national groups under provisions of the International Court of Justice Statute. A U.S. citizen has always been a member of the Court. ■



## BACKGROUND

The idea for the United Nations was elaborated in declarations signed at the wartime Allied conferences in Moscow and Tehran in 1943. The name "United Nations" was suggested by President Franklin Roosevelt. From August to October 1944, representatives of the U.S., U.K., France, U.S.S.R., and China met to elaborate the plans at the Dumbarton Oaks Estate in Washington, DC. Those and later talks produced proposals outlining the purposes of the organization, its membership and organs, as well as arrangements to maintain international peace and security and international economic and social cooperation. These proposals were discussed and debated by governments and private citizens worldwide.

On April 25, 1945, the United Nations Conference on International Organizations began in San Francisco. The 50 nations represented at the conference signed the Charter of the United Nations two months later on June 26. Poland, which was not represented at the conference, but for which a place among the original signatories had been reserved, added its name later, bringing the total of original signatories to 51. The UN came into existence on October 24, 1945, after the Charter had been ratified by the five permanent members of the Security Council—China, France, U.S.S.R., U.K., and U.S.—and by a majority of the other 46 signatories.

The U.S. Senate, by a vote of 89 to 2, gave its consent to the ratification of the UN Charter on July 28, 1945. In December 1945, the Senate and the House of Representatives, by unanimous votes, requested that the UN make its headquarters in the U.S. The offer was accepted and the UN headquarters building was constructed in New York City in 1949 and 1950 beside the East River on donated land, which is considered international territory. Under special agreement with the U.S., certain diplomatic privileges and immunities have been granted, but generally the laws of New York City, New York State, and the U.S. apply.

UN membership is open to all "peace-loving states" that accept the obligations of the UN Charter and, in the judgment of the organization, are able and willing to fulfill these obligations. Admission is determined by the General Assembly upon recommendation of the Security Council. With the admission of Palau in December 1994, 185 countries are members of the UN.

## U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THE UN

The U.S., as the world's leading political, economic, and military power, has an especially strong interest in cooperating with the multilateral system. The U.S. can pursue many of its interests more effectively and with less risk through the UN than it can by acting alone. Examples include: containing the spread of weapons of mass destruction; enforcing sanctions on pariah states such as Iraq; protecting the environment (ozone depletion, acid rain, climate change, deforestation); and combatting international crime, drug trafficking, and terrorism.

Engagement in the UN pays significant dividends to Americans in the form of a safer, more prosperous world. The UN offers a unique forum for advancing U.S. foreign policy objectives. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the U.S. plays a leading role in the UN's efforts to maintain international peace, promote democracy, and defend human rights. UN peacekeeping gives the U.S. a way to protect American interests in circumstances where either acting alone or doing nothing is unacceptable. UN mediation and preventive diplomacy efforts can provide an internationally acceptable setting in which nations can move away from rigid negotiating positions and begin to seek solutions to their problems.

The multilateral system also provides a powerful platform for advancing U.S. values and ideals in such areas as human rights, free trade, labor standards, and public health. UN programs also try to meet humanitarian needs for those disadvantaged by circumstances beyond their control. Private charitable agencies rely on the multiple capacities of the UN system to develop the infrastructure and political climate required for the

success of such programs. UN activities such as UNICEF, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and the World Food Program have made a remarkable impact on the lives of those most at risk around the globe: children, women, and refugees.

UN programs serve U.S. objectives by promoting free-market reform in the developing world. Those countries purchase more than one-third of the goods and services exported by our nation. Supporting economic development gives the U.S. more prosperous trading partners that are better able to import U.S. goods and less likely to "export" their own people to U.S. shores. To reduce global poverty, the UN attempts to help developing nations meet basic human needs—clean water, food, shelter, and health care—and other development goals.

In today's interdependent world, there is a clear need for multilateral bodies to set regulatory standards and arbitrate differences among countries in areas such as food product safety, air safety, telecommunications, and copyrights. For example, the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization have set food product safety and quality standards worldwide through a jointly sponsored trade standardization program called "Codex Alimentarius."

There are many direct benefits to our participation in the multilateral system. For example, a large part of U.S. financial contributions to the UN is returned to U.S. companies through sales of equipment, supplies, and consulting services.

The U.S. cannot rely solely on bilateral relations to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives but must take advantage of our participation in the UN in order to influence other governments' opinions and policies. Moreover, every dollar that we contribute to UN activities is matched by \$3 to \$10 given by others. This advances our interests while spreading the cost among other nations.

It is important that the UN operate efficiently and effectively. The U.S. seeks a UN that both gets back to basics and is ready to meet the challenges of the 21st century. U.S. efforts include:

## 185 Members of the United Nations<sup>1</sup>

Afghanistan (1946)	Dominican Republic	Malta (1964)	Swaziland (1968)
Albania (1955)	Ecuador	Marshall Islands (1991)	Sweden (1946)
Algeria (1962)	Egypt	Mauritania (1961)	Syria
Andorra (1993)	El Salvador	Mauritius (1968)	Tanzania (1961)
Angola (1976)	Equatorial Guinea (1968)	Mexico	Tajikistan (1992)
Antigua and Barbuda (1981)	Eritrea (1993)	Micronesia (1991)	Thailand (1946)
Argentina	Estonia (1991)	Moldova (1992)	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (1993)
Armenia (1992)	Ethiopia	Monaco (1993)	Togo (1960)
Australia	Fiji (1970)	Mongolia (1961)	Trinidad and Tobago (1962)
Austria (1955)	Finland (1955)	Morocco (1956)	Tunisia (1956)
Azerbaijan (1992)	France	Mozambique (1975)	Turkey
The Bahamas (1973)	Gabon (1960)	Namibia (1990)	Turkmenistan (1992)
Bahrain (1971)	The Gambia (1965)	Nepal (1955)	Uganda (1962)
Bangladesh (1974)	Georgia (1992)	Netherlands	Ukraine (formerly Ukrainian SSR)
Barbados (1966)	Germany (1973)	New Zealand	United Arab Emirates (1971)
Belarus (formerly Byelorussian SSR)	Ghana (1957)	Nicaragua	United Kingdom
Belgium	Greece	Niger (1960)	United States of America
Belize (1981)	Grenada (1974)	Nigeria (1960)	Uruguay
Benin (1960)	Guatemala	Norway	Uzbekistan (1992)
Bhutan (1971)	Guinea (1958)	Oman (1971)	Vanuatu (1981)
Bolivia	Guinea-Bissau (1974)	Pakistan (1947)	Venezuela
Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992)	Guyana (1966)	Palau (1994)	Vietnam (1977)
Botswana (1966)	Haiti	Panama	Yemen (1947)
Brazil	Honduras	Papua New Guinea (1975)	Yugoslavia <sup>4</sup>
Brunei Darussalam (1984)	Hungary (1955)	Paraguay	Zaire (1960)
Bulgaria (1955)	Iceland (1946)	Peru	Zambia (1964)
Burkina Faso (1960)	India	Philippines	Zimbabwe (1980)
Burma (1948)	Indonesia (1950)	Poland	
Burundi (1962)	Iran	Portugal (1955)	
Cambodia (1955)	Iraq	Qatar (1971)	
Cameroon (1960)	Ireland (1955)	Romania (1955)	
Canada	Israel (1949)	Russia <sup>3</sup>	
Cape Verde (1975)	Italy (1955)	Rwanda (1962)	
Central African Republic (1960)	Jamaica (1962)	St. Kitts and Nevis (1983)	
Chad (1960)	Japan (1956)	St. Lucia (1979)	
Chile	Jordan (1955)	St. Vincent and the Grenadines (1980)	
China <sup>2</sup>	Kazakhstan (1992)	Samoa (1976)	
Colombia	Kenya (1963)	San Marino (1992)	
Comoros (1975)	Korea, North (1991)	Sao Tome and Principe (1975)	
Congo (1960)	Korea, South (1991)	Saudi Arabia	
Costa Rica	Kuwait (1963)	Senegal (1960)	
Cote d'Ivoire (1960)	Kyrgyzstan (1992)	Seychelles (1976)	
Croatia (1992)	Laos (1955)	Sierra Leone (1961)	
Cuba	Latvia (1991)	Singapore (1965)	
Cyprus (1960)	Lebanon	Slovak Republic (1993)	
Czech Republic (1993)	Lesotho (1966)	Slovenia (1992)	
Denmark	Liberia	Solomon Islands (1978)	
Djibouti (1977)	Libya (1955)	Somalia (1960)	
Dominica (1978)	Liechtenstein (1990)	South Africa	
	Lithuania (1991)	Spain (1955)	
	Luxembourg	Sri Lanka (1955)	
	Madagascar (1960)	Sudan (1956)	
	Malawi (1964)	Suriname (1975)	
	Malaysia (1957)		
	Maldives (1965)		
	Mali (1960)		

<sup>1</sup>Year in parentheses indicates date of admission; countries with no date were original members in 1945.

<sup>2</sup>By Resolution 2758 (XXVI) of Oct. 25, 1971, the General Assembly decided "to restore all its rights to the People's Republic of China and to recognize the representative of its Government as the only legitimate representative of China to the United Nations."

<sup>3</sup>In December 1991, Russia assumed the permanent Security Council seat previously held by the U.S.S.R.

<sup>4</sup>Yugoslavia was suspended from participation in the General Assembly in 1992, but retains UN membership. □

• **Program Oversight**—Following up on last year's creation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services at UN headquarters, the U.S. is working to expand the inspector general concept to the UN's major specialized agencies;

• **Reducing Bureaucracies**—Important progress has been made in streamlining the UN system and the U.S. continues to work on reinventing a number of UN agencies;

• **Improving Management**—The U.S. applauds the initiatives of the Under Secretary General for Administration and Management, whose agenda for changing the management culture of the UN includes shaping a personnel system that gives more authority to managers, rewards merit, and improves accountability;

• **Security Council Reform**—The U.S. supports permanent seats on the Security Council for Japan and Germany and a modest enlargement of the Council to 20 seats;

• **Improving Responsiveness**—The U.S. seeks a UN able to respond to humanitarian crises more rapidly, economically, and effectively.

## SECURITY COUNCIL

Under the UN Charter, the Security Council has "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security," and all UN members "agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter."

Other organs of the UN make recommendations to member governments. The Security Council, however, has the power to make decisions which member governments must carry out under the Charter. A representative of each Security Council member must always be present at UN headquarters so that the Council can meet at any time.

Decisions in the Security Council on all substantive matters—for example, a decision calling for direct measures related to the settlement of a dispute—require the affirmative votes of nine members, including the support of all five permanent members. A negative vote—a veto—by a permanent member prevents adoption of a proposal that has received the required number of affirmative votes. Abstention is not regarded as a veto.

A state that is a member of the UN, but not of the Security Council, may participate in Security Council discussions in which the Council agrees that the country's interests are particularly affected. In recent years, the Council has interpreted this loosely, enabling many countries to take part in its discussions. Non-members routinely are invited to take part when they are parties to disputes being considered by the Council.

Under Chapter Six of the Charter, "Pacific Settlement of Disputes," the Security Council "may investigate any dispute, or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute." The Council may "recommend appropriate procedures or methods of adjustment" if it determines that the situation might endanger international peace and security. These recommendations are not binding on UN members.

Under Chapter Seven, the Council has broader power to decide what measures are to be taken in situations involving "threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, or acts of aggression." In such situations, the Council is not limited to recommendations but may take action, including the use of armed force "to maintain or restore international peace and security." This was the basis for UN armed action in Korea in 1950 and the use of coalition forces in Iraq and Kuwait in 1991. Decisions taken under Chapter Seven, such as economic sanctions, are binding on UN members.

## MAINTAINING THE PEACE

The UN's role in international collective security is defined by the UN Charter, which gives the Security Council the power to:

- Investigate any situation threatening international peace;
- Recommend procedures for peaceful resolution of a dispute;
- Call upon other member nations to completely or partially interrupt economic relations as well as sea, air, postal, and radio communications, or to sever diplomatic relations; and
- Enforce its decisions militarily, if necessary.

The United Nations has helped prevent many outbreaks of international violence from growing into wider conflicts. It has opened the way to negotiated settlements through its service as a center of debate and negotiation, as well as through UN-sponsored fact-finding missions, mediators, and truce observers. UN peacekeeping forces, comprised of troops and equipment supplied by member nations, have usually been able to limit or prevent conflict. Some conflicts, however, have proven to be beyond the capacity of the UN to influence. Key to the success of UN peacekeeping efforts is the willingness of the parties to a conflict to come to terms peacefully through a viable political process.

UN peacekeeping initiatives have ranged from small, diplomatic or political delegations to large mobilizations, the most extensive of which was the 500,000-strong 1950-53 defense of South Korea against an attack by North Korea. At present, the largest peacekeeping operations are in the former Yugoslavia, where about 40,000 peacekeepers from 38 nations are deployed. Until March 31, 1995, this was one operation (UNPROFOR). On that date the Security Council adopted three resolutions: establishing the UN Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO); extending UNPROFOR in Bosnia; and establishing the UN Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

Since the end of the Cold War, the number of peacekeeping operations has risen dramatically. More operations have been mounted since 1991 than in the previous 46 years. During 1991-92, peacekeeping activities were established in the Mideast (UNIKOM), Africa (UNTAG and MINURSO), Cambodia (UNAMIC and UNTAC), and the former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR). Since 1992, 10 more peacekeeping, observer, and assistance operations have been authorized: Chad (UNASOG), Mozambique (ONUMOZ), Rwanda (UNAMIR/UNOMUR), Somalia (UNOSOM II), El Salvador (ONUSAL), Liberia (UNOMIL), Georgia (UNOMIG), Haiti (UNMIH), Tajikistan (UNMOT) and Angola (UNAVEM).

Several of these operations have been completed and their mandates terminated in the past few years. These include UNTAG, UNASOG, UNTAC, ONUMOZ, UNOSOM II, and ONUSAL.

The proliferation of these operations reflects the view that, in the post-Cold War era, the UN can play an important role in defusing regional conflicts. These new operations also expand the traditional peacekeeping mandate to include such responsibilities as supervising elections, monitoring human rights, training police, and overseeing civil administration. With its higher profile, and facing increasing demands on its resources, the UN has had to make difficult choices. While multilateral peace operations can be a useful tool in resolving and containing conflicts, limited funds and the UN's own limited capacity to plan and implement peacekeeping operations require that priorities be established.

The Clinton Administration responded to the challenges posed by the growing number and complexity of UN peacekeeping operations by formulating a policy framework suited for this new environment. This policy addresses six major areas of reform: Improving how the U.S. decides which peace operations to support and whether U.S. troops should take part; reducing both U.S. and overall costs for UN peace operations; reaffirming longstanding U.S. policy on command and control of American military forces in UN operations; reforming UN management of those operations; improving the manner by which the U.S. funds and manages peace operations; and improving the standard of consultations between the U.S. executive branch and Congress on peace operations.

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly is made up of all 185 UN members, minus Yugoslavia, which was suspended in 1992. The Assembly meets in regular session once a year under a president elected from among the representatives. The regular session usually begins on the third Tuesday in September and ends in mid-December. Special sessions can be convened at the request of the Security Council, of a majority of UN members, or, if the majority concurs, of a single member. A special session will be held

in October 1995 at the head of government level to commemorate the UN's 50th anniversary.

Voting in the General Assembly on important questions—recommendations on peace and security; election of members to organs; admission, suspension, and expulsion of members; budgetary matters—is by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting. Other questions are decided by majority vote. Each member country has one vote. Apart from approval of budgetary matters, including adoption of a scale of assessment, Assembly resolutions are not binding on the members. The Assembly may make recommendations on any matters within the scope of the UN, except matters of peace and security under Security Council consideration.

As the only UN organ in which all members are represented, the Assembly serves as a forum for members to launch initiatives on international questions of peace, economic progress, and human rights. It can initiate studies; make recommendations; develop and codify international law; promote human rights; and further international economic, social, cultural, and educational programs.

The Assembly may take action on maintaining international peace if the Security Council is unable, usually due to disagreement among the permanent members, to exercise its primary responsibility. The "Uniting for Peace" resolutions, adopted in 1950, empower the Assembly to convene in emergency special session to recommend collective measures—including the use of armed force—in the case of a breach of the peace or act of aggression. Two-thirds of the members must approve any such recommendation. Emergency special sessions under this procedure have been held on nine occasions. The most recent, in 1982, considered the situation in the occupied Arab territories following Israel's unilateral extension of its laws, jurisdiction, and administration to the Golan Heights.

During the 1980s, the Assembly became a forum for the North-South dialogue—the discussion of issues between industrialized nations and developing countries. These issues came to the fore because of the phenomenal growth and changing makeup of the UN membership. In 1945, the UN had 51 members. It now has 185, of

which more than two-thirds are developing countries. Because of their numbers, developing countries are often able to determine the agenda of the Assembly, the character of its debates, and the nature of its decisions. For many developing countries, the UN is the source of much of their diplomatic influence and the principal outlet for their foreign relations initiatives.

## Economic and Social Council

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) assists the General Assembly in promoting international economic and social cooperation and development. ECOSOC has 54 members, 18 of whom are elected each year by the General Assembly for a three-year term. The U.S. has been a member since the UN was founded. ECOSOC meets once a year. The president is elected for a one-year term. Voting is by simple majority.

Through much of its history, ECOSOC has served primarily as a discussion vehicle for economic and social issues. ECOSOC had little authority to force action and a number of member states were concerned that its utility was only marginal. However, beginning in 1992, the U.S. and other nations began an effort to make ECOSOC more relevant by strengthening its policy responsibilities in economic, social, and related fields, particularly in furthering development objectives.

The resulting reform made ECOSOC the oversight and policy-setting body for UN operational development activities and established smaller executive boards for the UN Development Program (UNDP), UN Population Fund (UNFPA), and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) which would provide those agencies with operating guidance and promote more effective management. The reform also gave ECOSOC a strong hand in ensuring that UN agencies coordinated their work on issues of common interest, such as narcotics control, human rights, the alleviation of poverty, and HIV/AIDS prevention.

One positive impact of this reform was the manner in which the UN development system began to respond more coherently and efficiently to humanitarian crises around the world.

The creation of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) in 1993, whose activities are reviewed biennially by ECOSOC, also has strengthened coordination among the UN's operational relief agencies in such places as Bosnia, Cambodia, and Rwanda.

Another example was the ECOSOC decision in 1994 to authorize the creation of a new joint and cosponsored UN program on HIV/AIDS. This program will bring together the existing AIDS-related resources and expertise of the World Health Organization, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO, and the World Bank into one consolidated global program, eliminating duplication of effort and enhancing the ability of member states to cope with the AIDS pandemic. It is expected to begin operation in January 1996.

### Trusteeship Council

The UN trusteeship system was established to help ensure that non-self-governing territories were administered in the best interests of the inhabitants and of international peace and security. Those numerous territories—most of them former mandates of the League of Nations or territories taken from enemy states at the end of World War II—have all now attained self-government or independence, either as separate nations or by joining neighboring independent countries. The last, Palau, became a member of the UN in December 1994. The Trusteeship Council has suspended its activities.

### International Court of Justice

The International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the UN. Established in 1945, its main functions are to decide cases submitted to it by states and to give advisory opinions on legal questions submitted to it by the General Assembly or Security Council, or by such specialized agencies as may be authorized to do so by the General Assembly in accordance with the UN Charter.

The seat of the Court is in The Hague, Netherlands. It is composed of 15 judges elected by the General Assembly and the Security Council from a list of persons nominated by the national groups in the Permanent Court of Arbitration. Judges serve for nine years and may be re-elected. No

### UN Secretaries General

Trygve Lie (Norway)  
Feb. 1, 1946-April 10, 1953  
Dag Hammarskjöld (Sweden)  
April 10, 1953-Sept. 8, 1961  
U Thant (Burma)  
Nov. 3, 1961-Dec. 31, 1971  
(Initially appointed acting Secretary General; formally appointed Nov. 30, 1962)  
Kurt Waldheim (Austria)  
Jan. 1, 1972-Dec. 31, 1981  
Javier Perez de Cuellar (Peru)  
Jan. 1, 1982-Dec. 31, 1991  
Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Egypt)  
Jan. 1, 1992-present □

two may be nationals of the same country. One-third of the Court is elected every three years. An American has always been a member of the Court. Questions before the Court are decided by a majority of judges present.

Only states may be parties in cases before the International Court of Justice. This does not preclude private interests from being the subject of proceedings if one state brings the case against another. While jurisdiction of the Court is based on the consent of the parties, any judgements reached are binding. The Security Council can be called upon by a party to determine measures to be taken to enforce a judgment if the other party fails to perform its obligations. The U.S. accepted the Court's compulsory jurisdiction in 1946 but withdrew its acceptance following the Court's decision in a 1986 case involving activities in Nicaragua. Examples of cases include:

- A complaint by the U.S. in 1980 that Iran was detaining American diplomats in Tehran in violation of international law;
- A dispute between Tunisia and Libya over the delimitation of the continental shelf between them;
- A dispute over the course of the maritime boundary dividing the U.S. and Canada in the Gulf of Maine area.

### Secretariat

The Secretariat is headed by the Secretary General, assisted by a staff of international civil servants worldwide. It provides studies, information, and facilities needed by UN bodies for

their meetings. It also carries out tasks as directed by the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and other UN bodies. The Charter provides that the staff be chosen by application of the "highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity," with due regard for the importance of recruiting on a wide geographical basis.

The Charter provides that the staff shall not seek or receive instructions from any authority other than the UN. Each UN member is enjoined to respect the international character of the Secretariat and not seek to influence its staff. The Secretary General alone is responsible for staff selection.

The Secretary General's duties include helping resolve international disputes, administering peacekeeping operations, organizing international conferences, gathering information on the implementation of Security Council decisions, and consulting with member governments regarding various initiatives. Key Secretariat offices in this area include the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Secretary General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter that, in his or her opinion, may threaten international peace and security.

### THE UN FAMILY

In addition to the principal UN organs, the UN family includes nearly 30 major programs or agencies. Some were in existence before the UN was created and are related to it by agreement. Others were established by the General Assembly. Each provides expertise in a specific area. Those agencies include:

#### UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Headquartered in New York City, UNICEF provides long-term humanitarian and developmental assistance to children and mothers in developing countries. A voluntarily funded agency, UNICEF relies on contributions from governments and private donors. Its programs emphasize developing community-level services to promote the health and well-being of children. UNICEF was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1965.

### **UN Development Program (UNDP).**

Headquartered in New York City, UNDP has a U.S. administrator and is the largest multilateral source of grant technical assistance in the world. Voluntarily funded, it provides expert advice, training, and limited equipment to developing countries, with increasing emphasis on assistance to the poorest countries.

**International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).** Headquartered in Vienna, Austria, the IAEA seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to inhibit its use for military purposes. The IAEA's programs encourage the development of the peaceful application of nuclear technology, provide international safeguards against its misuse, and facilitate the application of safety measures in its use. IAEA expanded its nuclear safety efforts in response to the Chernobyl disaster in 1986.

### **World Food Program (WFP).**

Headquartered in Rome, Italy, the WFP distributes food commodities to support development projects, to long-term refugees and displaced persons, and as emergency food assistance in situations of natural and man-made disasters. Development projects, traditionally two-thirds of WFP programs, now constitute about 40%, as emergency and protracted refugee situations result in increasing demands for WFP programs and resources. WFP operates exclusively on contributions of commodities and cash donated by governments.

**Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).** Headquartered in Rome, Italy, FAO programs seek to raise levels of nutrition and standards of living; to improve the production, processing, marketing, and distribution of food and agricultural products; to promote rural development; and, by these means, to eliminate hunger. FAO's efforts to eliminate the Mediterranean fruit fly from the Caribbean Basin benefit the U.S. citrus industry. Likewise, U.S. cattle raisers have a direct stake in FAO efforts to eliminate a tick found in the Caribbean that carries a threatening cattle disease.

**World Health Organization (WHO).** Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, WHO acts as a coordinating authority

on international public health. After years of fighting smallpox, WHO declared in 1979 that the disease had been eradicated. It is nearing success in developing vaccines against malaria and schistosomiasis and aims to eradicate polio by the year 2000. WHO is also working toward the goal of "health for all by the year 2000" by seeking a level of health for all the world's people that will enable them to lead productive lives.

**Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).** Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, UNHCR protects and supports refugees at the request of a government or the UN and assists in their return or resettlement. UNHCR was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1954 and 1982.

**Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.** At the urging of the U.S. and other nations, the General Assembly established the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights in 1993. The High Commissioner's mandate includes promotion and protection of human rights worldwide through direct contact with individual governments and the provision of technical assistance where appropriate. Holding the rank of Under Secretary General, the High Commissioner coordinates human rights activities throughout the UN system and supervises the UN Center for Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland.

**International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).** Headquartered in Montreal, Canada, ICAO develops the principles and techniques of international air navigation and fosters the planning and development of international air transport to ensure safe and orderly growth. The ICAO Council adopts standards and recommended practices concerning air navigation, prevention of unlawful interference, and facilitation of border-crossing procedures for international civil aviation. Standards developed by ICAO directly affect U.S. commercial air travel and benefit U.S. industries, which supply the greatest share of aircraft and equipment worldwide.

**International Telecommunication Union (ITU).** Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, ITU promotes the improvement of telecommunication services worldwide. As the largest

producer and supplier of telecommunications equipment, the U.S. benefits from the technical assistance extended to developing countries from agencies such as the ITU.

**International Maritime Organization (IMO).** Headquartered in London, U.K., IMO promotes cooperation among governments and the shipping industry to improve maritime safety and to prevent marine pollution. Recent U.S. initiatives at IMO have included amendments to the Safety of Life at Sea Convention, which upgraded fire protection standards on passenger ships, and amendments to the Convention on the Prevention of Maritime Pollution, which required double hulls on all tankers. U.S. maritime interests benefit directly from IMO work on standardization, safety, and ocean anti-pollution programs.

**World Meteorological Organization (WMO).** Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, WMO provides weather information to a wide range of Americans, including farmers, mariners, aviators, and travelers. Its work has significant economic and social impact on the U.S..

**International Labor Organization (ILO).** Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, ILO seeks to strengthen worker rights, improve working and living conditions, create employment, and provide information and training opportunities. ILO programs include the occupational safety and health hazard alert system and the labor standards and human rights programs.

**UN Environment Program (UNEP).** Headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, UNEP coordinates UN environmental activities, assisting developing countries in implementing environmentally sound policies. UNEP has developed guidelines and treaties on issues such as the international transport of potentially harmful chemicals, transboundary air pollution, and contamination of international waterways.

## **ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT**

The UN Charter, adopted in 1945, envisaged a system of regulation that would ensure "the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and

economic resources." The advent of nuclear weapons came only weeks after the signing of the Charter and provided immediate impetus to concepts of arms limitation and disarmament. In fact, the first resolution of the first meeting of the General Assembly (January 24, 1946) was entitled "The Establishment of a Commission to Deal with the Problems Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy" and called upon the commission to make specific proposals for "the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction."

The UN has established several forums to address multilateral disarmament issues. The principal ones are the First Committee of the UN General Assembly and the UN Disarmament Commission. Items on the agenda include consideration of the possible merits of a nuclear test ban, outer-space arms control, efforts to ban chemical weapons, nuclear and conventional disarmament, nuclear-weapon-free zones, reduction of military budgets, and measures to strengthen international security.

The Conference on Disarmament is the sole forum established by the international community for the negotiation of multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements. It has 38 members representing all areas of the world, including the five major nuclear-weapon states (China, France, Russia, U.K., and U.S.). While the conference is not formally a UN organization, it is linked to the UN through a personal representative of the Secretary General; this representative serves as the secretary general of the conference. Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly often request the conference to consider specific disarmament matters. In turn, the conference annually reports on its activities to the General Assembly.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

The pursuit of human rights was one of the central reasons for creating the United Nations. World War II atrocities and genocide led to a ready consensus that the new organization must work to prevent any similar tragedies in the future. An early

objective was creating a legal framework for considering and acting on complaints about human rights violations.

The UN Charter obliges all member nations to promote "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights" and to take "joint and separate action" to that end. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, though not legally binding, was adopted by the General Assembly in 1948 as a common standard of achievement for all. The UN Human Rights Commission (UNHRC), under ECOSOC, is the primary UN body charged with promoting human rights, primarily through investigations and offers of technical assistance. The General Assembly regularly takes up human rights issues.

The position of High Commissioner for Human Rights was established by the General Assembly in 1993 at the urging of the U.S. and other nations. The High Commissioner, as the official principally responsible for all UN human rights activities, supervises the UN Center for Human Rights in Geneva and coordinates human rights promotion and protection worldwide through direct contact with individual governments.

The U.S. considers the United Nations to be a first line of defense of the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is also a means by which those principles can be applied more broadly around the world. A case in point is support by the United Nations for countries in transition to democracy. Technical assistance in providing free and fair elections, improving judicial structures, drafting constitutions, training human rights officials, and transforming armed movements into political parties have contributed significantly to democratization worldwide.

The United Nations is also a forum in which to support the right of women to participate fully in the political, economic, and social life of their countries.

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

The member countries of the UN and its specialized agencies—the "shareholders" of the system—give guidance and make decisions on substantive and administrative issues in regular meetings held throughout each year.

Governing bodies made up of member states include not only the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and the Security Council, but also counterpart bodies dealing with the governance of all other UN system agencies. For example, the World Health Assembly and the Executive Board oversee the work of WHO. Each year, the Department of State accredits U.S. delegations to more than 600 meetings of governing bodies.

When an issue is considered particularly important, the General Assembly may convene an international conference to focus global attention and build a consensus for consolidated action. High-level U.S. delegations use these opportunities to promote U.S. policy viewpoints and develop international agreements on future activities. Recent examples include:

- The UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992, led to the creation of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development to advance the conclusions reached in Agenda 21, the final text of agreements negotiated by governments at UNCED;
- The World Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo, Egypt, in September 1994, approved a program of action to address the critical challenges and interrelationships between population and sustainable development over the next 20 years;
- The World Summit on Trade Efficiency, held in October 1994 in Columbus, Ohio, cosponsored by UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the city of Columbus, and private-sector business, focused on the use of modern information technology to expand international trade;
- The World Summit for Social Development, held in March 1995 in Copenhagen, Denmark, underscored national responsibility for sustainable development and secured high-level commitment to plans that invest in basic education, health care, and economic opportunity for all, including women and girls;
- The Fourth World Conference on Women, planned for Beijing, China, in September 1995, will seek to accelerate implementation of the historic agree-



ments reached at the Third World Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1985; and

• The Second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), to be convened in June 1996 in Istanbul, Turkey, will consider the challenges of human settlement development and management in the 21st century.

## FINANCING

The UN system is financed in two ways: assessed and voluntary contributions from member states.

The regular two-year budgets of the UN and its specialized agencies are funded by assessments. In the case of the UN, the General Assembly approves the regular budget and determines the assessment for each member. This is broadly based on the relative capacity of each country to pay, as measured by national income statistics, although there are some variations.

The Assembly has established the principle that no member should pay more than 25% of the regular budget. The U.S. is the only nation affected by this limitation. If the standard criterion of "capacity to pay" were applied in the same manner to the U.S. as to other major industrial powers, the U.S. would be assessed at about 28%.

Under the scale of assessments adopted for 1995, other major contributors to the regular UN budget are Japan (14%), Germany (9%), Russia (6%), France (6%), the U.K. (5%), Italy (5%) and Canada (3%). For 1995, assessment against members was \$1.3 billion per year; the net U.S. share was \$304 million. An additional \$1.5 billion was assessed to finance the activities of 11 UN-affiliated agencies, including IAEA, ILO, and WHO; the U.S. share was \$361 million.

Due to the dramatic increase in the number of UN peacekeeping operations since 1991, expenditures for these operations have increased significantly. The Clinton Administration is working to reduce overall peacekeeping costs and secure the adoption of a financing system that does not place undue burdens on any one nation. The assessed budget for UN peacekeeping activities in 1995 was \$3.2 billion; the U.S. assessed share was \$1 billion.

## U.S. Representatives to the United Nations

Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.  
March 1946-June 1946  
Herschel V. Johnson (acting)  
June 1946-Jan. 1947  
Warren R. Austin  
Jan. 1947-Jan. 1953  
Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr.  
Jan. 1953-Sept. 1960  
James J. Wadsworth  
Sept. 1960-Jan. 1961  
Adlai E. Stevenson  
Jan. 1961-July 1965  
Arthur J. Goldberg  
July 1965-June 1968  
George W. Ball  
June 1968-Sept. 1968  
James Russell Wiggins  
Oct. 1968-Jan. 1969  
Charles W. Yost  
Jan. 1969-Feb. 1971  
George Bush  
Feb. 1971-Jan. 1973  
John P. Scali  
Feb. 1973-June 1975  
Daniel P. Moynihan  
June 1975-Feb. 1976  
William W. Scranton  
March 1976-Jan. 1977  
Andrew Young  
Jan. 1977-April 1979  
Donald McHenry  
April 1979-Jan. 1981  
Jeane J. Kirkpatrick  
Feb. 1981-April 1985  
Vernon Walters  
May 1985-Jan. 1989  
Thomas R. Pickering  
March 1989-May 1992  
Edward J. Perkins  
May 1992-Jan. 1993  
Madeleine K. Albright  
Feb. 1993-present □

Special UN programs not included in the regular budget—such as UNICEF and WFP—are financed by voluntary contributions from member governments. In 1995, such contributions

totaled \$6.8 billion; the U.S. contribution was approximately \$1.1 billion. Much of that is not cash, but rather agricultural commodities donated for afflicted populations.

## U.S. REPRESENTATION

The U.S. Permanent Mission to the UN in New York is headed by the U.S. Representative to the UN, with the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. The current U.S. Permanent Representative is also a member of the President's Cabinet. The mission serves as the channel of communication for the U.S. Government with the UN organs, agencies, and commissions at the UN headquarters and with the other permanent missions accredited to the UN and the non-member observer missions. The U.S. mission has a professional staff made up largely of career Foreign Service officers, including specialists in political, economic, social, financial, legal, and military issues.

The U.S. also maintains missions to international organizations in Geneva, Rome, Vienna, Nairobi, Montreal, London, and Paris. These missions report to the Department of State and receive guidance on questions of policy from the President, through the Secretary of State. Relations with the UN and its family of agencies are coordinated by the Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs.

The U.S. Mission to the United Nations is located at 799 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017 (tel. 212-415-4000). ■

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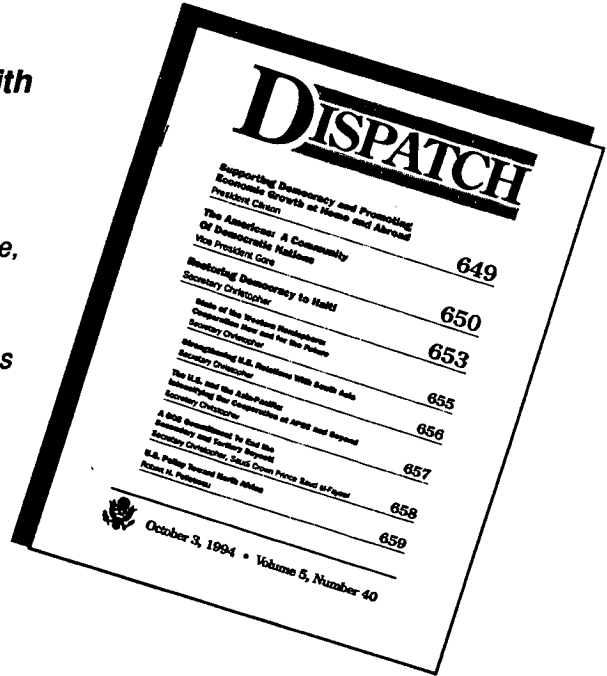
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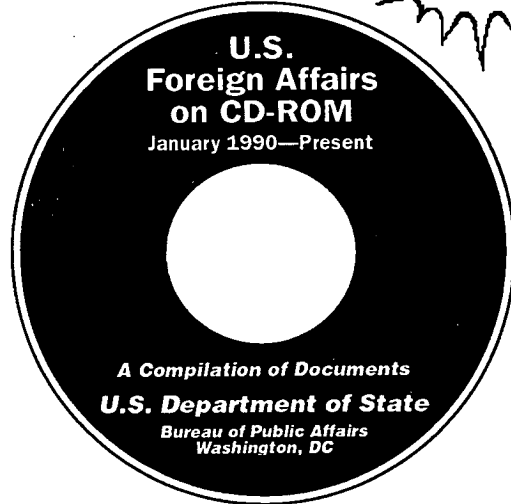
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